

The Younger Twin

BY WILBUR DANIEL STEELE



"MASTER—'r you a pirate?" Skipper Lemuel Hanks looked up from his seat on the deck of the *Equatorial Dawn*. "Naw," he growled. "Go on home."

The small "summer folkses' " boy expressed disappointment by a disrespectful grimace, withdrew his face from the edge of the wharf, and trotted away along the boards in search of a more entertaining and less law-abiding seafarer. Skipper Lemuel listened to his waning footsteps with a slight frown between his eyebrows. The frown deepened and spread over his forehead. He squeezed a wooden egg out of the blue-yarn sock which he had been in the act of repairing, and commenced to pace the deck uneasily, still frowning.

The tide was out, and the *Equatorial Dawn* lay on the flats in the shadow of Pickert's Wharf, canting outward a little. It was not a large vessel, this schooner of his. Skipper Lemuel was at the same time Owner Lemuel, Mate Lemuel, Able-Seaman Lemuel, and Cabin-boy Lemuel, pursuing his business quite alone; and when he spoke of the *Equatorial Dawn* as "Fo'ty fut over all," it was with a mental reservation in favor of the bowsprit.

He stood in the stern, which was square, like a brick church, and scowled to himself. When he became aware that his eyes rested upon Spankin' Head Light a mile across the harbor, he turned them away violently, as though there was something wrong with his conscience.

"Be I a pirutt? Be I a pirutt? Well, I snum t' man—mebby I be."

He mopped a red and troubled brow and retired below, as though the honest light of day had asked him a question. Skipper Lemuel Hanks, besides being tall and thirty, and rather well built, was extraordinarily deliberate in mind

and movement. It was quite widely said of him that he "knew what he wanted," and also that he "went and got it." So when, on a day some two years prior to the episode just recounted, he had raised the Tin Cup Islands two points on his weather bow, and at the same moment and quite without relevancy muttered to himself, "I must be gettin' a wife," it then became perfectly fixed and certain that he would be "gettin' a wife." And also that there would be no furore or fuss of any sort connected with the operation.

He went ashore in Chatham with an unclouded eye and found a girl—"quite a putty girl." He wooed her for three trips running, and then, on the very evening he had considered laying his proposition before her, she had to "scuttle the hull c'ntraption" by turning "soft." She had even made it apparent that she desired to hold his hand. He left the house and took no more freights to Chatham. He was looking for a wife, not for a "mush."

He had paid his suit to a widow in South Boston, and she had betrayed him in a similar fashion. Another possibility in Rockport, Maine, had laid her fair head on his chest in a disastrous moment when he happened to be off his guard. Skipper Lemuel despaired, and for the first time in his life began to waver.

Perhaps he had set his ideal too high. Perhaps the world had fallen upon "softer" days. Perhaps there *were* no more women like his mother—perhaps that race of mortal Amazons had become extinct. But he had seen connubial happiness, and the vision refused to depart out of him. He had heard his father (likewise a mariner) giving orders on his own deck, and he had seen him *taking* orders in his own kitchen, and he had watched him ripen in pleasant days and pass away unhurriedly, without the insidious palliative of "mush."

Skipper Lemuel refused to give up. Instead, he did a more cowardly thing—he sank into inaction. For thirteen months he studiously avoided the paths of women.

And then one evening he steered the *Equatorial Dawn* into Old Harbor with a cargo of early apples from up Connecticut way. Through the dusk he made out a vessel lying in his accustomed berth alongside Pickert's Wharf, and he turned to the westward and dropped his anchor in the Cove, under the sheltering thumb of Spankin' Head.

He got up early in the morning, in hopes that the intruder might have cleared during the night. He was anxious to get the apples out. But she still sat there on the sand. He repaired below to wash up, only to discover that the last drop of water in the butt had gone for supper coffee the night before. Immediately thereupon he became not only three times as dirty as he had been before, but frightfully thirsty as well. Returning above-decks to look out for the local water-boat, he found her trundling solemnly between a couple of mackerelmen at least two miles away to the eastward. He sighed and let the yellow dinghy-boat slide down from the stern davits. It was quite a pull from where the *Equatorial Dawn* lay to the wharves of the waterfront.

"S tew much," he grumbled, as he fitted the oars in their locks. "An' 'thout breakf's', tew." Then he happened to look over his shoulder and his face lightened with a fresh thought. "I snum t' man! There's Spankin' Head—no more'n a step er so. They must hev water at th' Light, hey."

He went up a crackly path from the beach and stood in the kitchen doorway of the light-keeper's quarters.

"Could I beg a drop o'

water, Mrs.—ah—Miss—*Madam*? I find I'm all out an' the water-boat's—"

The young woman who had been kneading bread, with her back to the door, turned slowly and regarded the speaker without embarrassment. Something turned over with a flop in the chest of Skipper Lemuel. She had red hair—tied with a blue ribbon. His mother's hair had been red. But this pleasurable displacement lasted only a moment before he recognized it as something which had happened to him before, and recollected also that inevitable disillusionment lay in its train. To complete his return to sanity he murmured the word "mush."

"I was sayin'," he repeated, "I wonder if I could beg a drop o'—"

"I heard you the first time."

Skipper Lemuel whirled about with a gasp of incredulity. The blood mounted to his scalp. She came



"MISTER—'R YOU A PIRATE?"

across the floor and leaned against the door-jamb, uncomfortably near.

"See that strip of land over there?" she asked, pointing across the water to the place where Spankin' Head Neck joined the mainland.

"Ugh-huh." The man gazed blankly. "'S I was sayin'—"

"See how it runs along there and comes away around here—a long ways, isn't it?"

"Ugh-huh." And then he raised his tin bucket and shook it and said very loudly, as though to a deaf person, "Water, you understand—*water!*"

"Yes. That's what I'm talking about. You know we don't have *city* water out here. We haul it all that way around through heavy sand. You can fill your bucket at the tank this once, but don't get the habit—that's all."

The master of the *Equatorial Dawn* allowed his mouth to hang open for some moments, but the eyes fixed upon her were glowing. How well he remembered that tone—those gestures. He might have been a lad again, in the maternal kitchen. Moved by an ancient association of ideas, he shifted his boot-toe a fraction of a second before the butt of a broom-handle struck that spot on the floor.

"You may not know it, but I have to sweep all that gravel out after you bring it in," she informed him. "Good day."

It was the following day, and a Sabbath. The interloper still monopolized Pickert's in idleness and the skipper of the *Equatorial Dawn* sat on his deck-house and darned socks—he was extraordinarily hard on socks. Now and then his eyes wandered, without evident purpose, to that portion of the horizon dominated by Spankin' Head Light. Occasionally he might have been heard to mutter something to the effect that "she hed the right of it."

"Reckon 'twas sort of an imp'sition. Might's well go an' pay it back."

He rose, put away the sock, filled the bucket from the now replenished butt, and entered the dinghy-boat.

Man is a helpless sort of an animal. Most other creatures having had any experience at all with traps seem to know enough to let them severely alone

thereafter. In general they have wonderful noses.

Skipper Lemuel went up the crackly path, came to a halt before the door of the light-tower, stood there for a moment in a state of petrification, and, when he had at last found his internal voice, cried out that he might have known.

Five of them! Five youthful and smirking ensigns from the ship in the lower harbor, draped over the steps—and she was actually *holding hands*. She took one of them away to wave at him, calling, merrily: "Hello, good-looking man! What do you want?"

It may be said to his credit that he did not answer. Instead, he lowered his bitter eyes and moved off toward the water-tank. He had learned his lesson. He reached up with a grim gesture of finality and poured the water into the tank and came away. It had been in the kitchen there—he paused to scowl into that House of Judas—and the bucket left his limp hand and crashed on the gravel.

"Once you can do it—twice you can't," a familiar voice emerged. "No *siree*. Not to-day. You go right straight and buy it off the water-boat—*hear?*"

The admonition fell short, for the reason that the head of the intended listener had been thrust around the corner of the building. After a moment the owner withdrew it and exploded into the doorway, "*You ain't her.*"

"I do hope there's somebody looking out for you, because if there isn't—" But the ears were out of range once more.

"No, you ain't her," he recapitulated, after a season of mental gymnastics. "I see. She's got a green ribb'n wropped round her head, an' yourn's—yourn's *blue*." He sighed. I imagine Newton may have sighed so after the apple struck the ground. There is nothing so exhausting as a perfectly new idea.

"This is the day I'm busy," the lady of the blue ribbon suggested. It was evident that she was about to do some Sabbath sweeping, as she took up the broom in both hands. Skipper Lemuel moved off toward his beached dinghy, and under his feet the gravel sent up a staccato of triumph to the sky.

It was a month before the *Equatorial Dawn* had another freight for Old Harbor, and on this occasion the berth at Pickert's was vacant. Accordingly, being so handy, Skipper Lemuel went ashore and hunted up some of his old friends. Some of these old friends were old friends of Cap'n Dave Small, over at the Light. Yes, Dave had "a couple o' twin girls." Josiah Nickerson gave the straightest account.

"Nice one's Laura—sour one's Aura. An' they's certainly some dif'runce. Laura's quite young, y' know—'Younger Twin,' we call 'er hereabouts."

The morning after, Skipper Lemuel rowed the yellow dinghy a whole mile across the harbor to call on Cap'n Small—no slight thing to do for an old friend once removed. He had a narrow escape in the Light garden, where he almost ran into the "green ribb'n" watering the geraniums, but he managed to sheer off before she could effect any greater indignity than a pleasant nod. He attained the kitchen door without further misadventure, walked in boldly, and took a chair not too far from the entrance.

"I'm thinkin' o' gettin' married," he announced in a loud tone of voice, this being his idea of eliminating furore and fuss. Then he arose hastily and moved to the doorway as the fair one advanced out of the gloom. She came and stood in front of him, her arms akimbo, her chin thrust forward, a calculating and unimpassioned light in her eyes.

"Well," she said, "and just exactly *who* were you thinking of getting married to? Say."

The suitor's feet shuffled restlessly. He fingered the door-jamb behind his back.

"Mmmm—I—I hedn' jest decided."

"I thought you hadn't. Don't step on those geraniums as you go out, or—"

He did not step on the geraniums, but he went, hugely elated with the progress he had made. For three days in succession he toiled across the harbor to call on Cap'n Small, made his announcement, suffered cross-examination, and came away, all with increasing satisfaction. It was on the evening of the third day, while he was smoking his go-to-bed pipe on the edge of Pickert's Wharf, that doubt first assailed him.

After all, how rapidly *was* he getting on? After all, was the time not approaching when some further development was to be expected? He brooded over this problem for upward of an hour in the gathering gloom. Then he let himself down to the deck of the *Equatorial Dawn* and shook his head.

"I'll do it," he muttered with determination.

The following day was rather warm, and Skipper Lemuel's face was moist and rosy from his exertions over the oars.

"I'm thinkin' of gettin' married," he repeated his formula, at the same time hitching forward a little on the chair, as was his precautionary habit. But the other did not advance this time. Instead she tittered.

"Oh, isn't that nice!" she said. "Won't you have a doughnut? They're just fresh out of the kettle."

The man ignored the offer. He peered at her figure with a stern perplexity.

"I said," he repeated, "I'm thinkin' of gettin' married."

"Who to? Do tell me!"

The time had come for developments.

"To *you*!" he exploded.

"Oh, you dear old sweet thing! *When?*"

The skipper's gorge rose and he retreated to the door, smothered with a huge disgust. He reflected upon the fact that it had been too good from the first to be true. And then he remembered his decision of the preceding night and turned, defiantly.

"I stepped on the geraniums," he growled.

"Oh, dear suds, don't mind about that. Tell me some more about marrying me. I might as well tell you right off that I wouldn't think of it under any considerations—but if I *should*, you know you'd have to carry me off—in secret."

Skipper Lemuel was so dumfounded that he blurted, "Why?"

"Because father wouldn't hear to it, and sister would just about raise the roof—that's why."

"I ain't that kind," snarled the mariner. And then he went back and clambered into the yellow dinghy, oppressed by gloom. He remained gloomy for five days, nor did he return to Spankin'

Head during that time. For the most part he sat on the taffrail of the *Equatorial Dawn* and brooded over the ruins. Laying aside the suggested criminal aspect of the affair, what was there left? He could perceive little but "mush." She had come so splendidly through the preliminary stages—only to fail in the moment of stress. He winced at every fresh consideration of it. Sift it as he would, there remained forever but one meager residuum of cheer, and to this he returned time after time for what comfort it held. She had said she would not marry him under any considerations. There was something self-respecting about that—something high-handed, almost belligerent.

"Well," he said on the sixth morning, "I give in. When 'll it be?"

"When will *what* be?" she inquired,

with a return of asperity. She was rolling out pie-crust and there was a certain vague suggestion of offensive weapons about the roller in her hand.

"Our gettin' married."

"When the cows come home."

"I never knew you kep' 'em."

"We don't. Good-by."

The delighted seafarer had a narrow escape in the garden, where that young and frivolous "green ribb'n" nearly had hold of his sleeve before he realized what she was about, and then pursued him in his dignified retreat to the beach with irritating pleasantries. Once fairly off the flats, however, he could rest on his oars, mop his blazing brow, and return to his pleasant contemplation of the beloved's rehabilitation.

"She hez her off days," he ruminated, in a glow of charity, "just like any other mortil. 'S tew much t' ast puffection every day 'n the week, I s'pose."

He decided it was an "off day" when he came back on his next trip and reiterated his formula of capitulation.

"Waal, I give in. When 'll it be?"

"When will *what* be?"

"Our gettin' married." He prepared to rise.

"I tell you I wouldn't think of it—I wouldn't—I *wouldn't*." But she offered him a pie-crust tart, putting the effect to death. He scowled. He leaned forward and squinted suspiciously. No. It was "blue ribb'n" all right.

"Don't want it," he growled, in extreme bitterness.

"Lem's mad and I'm glad," she caroled.

The master of the *Equatorial Dawn* rose to his feet, pulled down the sleeves of his jacket, and strode to the door.

"I'm through," he said. "I'm through with you an' all yer kind. T'-morrow I won't come nigh ye, ner day after t'-morrow. I'll leave ye be t' think. When I *do* come you'll say 'yes' er 'no.' Good day, Miss Small."



"I'M THROUGH WITH YOU AN' ALL YER KIND"

"You wait just a minute," she cried. She came swiftly across the floor and stood before him, her chin raised and an unaccountable light in her eyes. "I wouldn't be chained to that dreadful temper of yours for a million trillion dollars—in gold," she assured him. "It's positively dangerous. You ought to see a doctor about it—Lem."

The man, unable to make head or tail of his conflicting emotions, lowered his bewildered eyes. "Blue ribb'n" was holding his hand. A moment later the yellow dinghy-boat experienced the most violent launching of its existence, and Skipper Lemuel Hanks quitted the shores of Spankin' Head for ever.

Late in the evening of the same day Gabe Dow, Mr. Pickert's handy-man, perceived the master of the *Equatorial Dawn* beckoning him with an impetuosity quite astounding in that most deliberate of men.

"What's a matter?" he inquired.

"Matter a plenty," roared the other. "If ye want them salt fish carried out o' here in this vessel, ye got t' scabble round an' get 'em hove aboard bright 'n' early in the mornin'. Ye must think I'm summer folks, th' way ye 'spect me t' hang round dewin' nothin'."

So it was that the handy-man was up, and a half-dozen co-laborers up with him, long before the morning stars had begun to pale; and so efficacious were the profane labors of the handful that by ten o'clock in the forenoon their leader was slapping the skipper of the laden craft on the back and bidding him a fine voyage.

His expression was less congenial when he happened to pass the berth some six hours later and found the *Equatorial Dawn* squatting there as stolidly as ever, and her master puffing a meditative pipe on the after-deck.

"What seems t' be the matter, Lem?" he called down. "Go t' sleep an' lose yer tide, did ye?"

The master turned a fiery and scowling countenance. "Who's navigatin' this vessel?" he inquired. The handy-man thought of an answer, but decided not to make it. He had old Mr. Pickert down in person the day after that to point out to him the defects

in the sailing schedules of the *Equatorial Dawn*.

"Them haddick 'll sp'ile on his hands afore he gets his old she-raft outside the Head," he intimated, making occult gestures above the stranded vessel.

"On his hands," the wharf-owner repeated with grim significance. And then, fearing that perhaps his meaning had not quite gone home to his only legal witness, added, "Not on *your* hands, Gabe—nor on *mine*." He went away, but the handy-man remained to hang over the edge of the wharf and converse with an imaginary companion.

"Wouldn't be s'prised if he took a row over t' th' Head. Wunnerful exercise, rowin'. Ye say ye ain't blind. I ain't, either." Then he, too, went away, followed as far as the wharf-end by an outraged seafaring character with baleful red eyes.

Skipper Lemuel did row over to the Head the next morning—not in the interests of physical culture, but rather for the purpose of bestowing in certain quarters what he termed "a piece of his mind." From afar off he marked a figure in white hovering about that part of the beach where it had been his habit to land, but as he came nearer the figure withdrew and disappeared among the Light buildings.

"Won'er what she's up tew," murmured the oarsman, wrinkling his brow, "whichever she is."

His wonderings were to be set at rest sooner than he expected. He was striding purposefully up the gravel incline, mentally rehearsing his "piece of mind" with appropriate contortions of his forehead, when his steps were arrested by the sight of a bit of paper reposing in his path. There was something neat and geometrical about it that led him to bend over and examine it at closer range. Bold on its face he read the inscription, "For Mister Lemuel."

The master of the *Equatorial Dawn* straightened up with a jerk and peered about him guiltily. He stared suspiciously at the Light buildings. He lurched forward and covered the treacherous missive with his boot, as if by accident.

After a season he bent down to pluck a wild flower (though not generally giv-

en to such soft practices) and deftly abstracted the fragment of paper from beneath his sole. Still casually, he opened and read:

"Yes." Three o'clock to-morrow morning on the beach. Don't say anything to

signalized chiefly by the absent text. After five minutes or so of this dreary monotone the young woman at the bread-board turned around and spoke with an irate sarcasm.

"Would you have the kindness not to stare at me so?"

Her caller smiled sagely, but did not remove his gaze from the ceiling.

"And stop talking so loud," she adjured him, stamping a wrathful foot. "I declare to goodness—"

"Hum dum mity dum," continued the mariner, making it plain that he saw through her swindle. "I got it all right," he vouchsafed at length, tipping his chair down and favoring her with a slow wink of his left eye. "Don't you worry about that."

"You've got it? Well, if its anything catching—and I presume it is—please get out of this kitchen. Scat!"

"Hum dum mity dum," he resumed, returning his attention to the ceiling. "I won't let on," he reassured her when he had come to the end of the stanza. "I won't take no notice of ye. Don't you worry. Hummity dum dum—"

"You *won't*, won't you?" The young woman lifted a pail of tepid mop-water from the sink. "Now I'm going to start cleaning this kitchen in five seconds by the clock—understand?"

Skipper Lemuel left off his humming and regarded the object of his affections a little uneasily. It seemed to him that she was rather overdoing the part of caution. Then with a sudden qualm of misgiving he wheeled and stared out through the doorway. Ah—that was the lay of the land!



"I'M HERE, LEMUEL." CAME THE SUPERFLUOUS REASSURANCE

me to-day—don't even notice me—somebody might suspect. Get Rev. Whatcomb. YOU KNOW WHO.

"So." He hitched up his sleeves, smoothed his forelock, and strode on with a lighter step than his deliberativeness had ever allowed him to utilize before. Once seated in his accustomed chair in the kitchen, he fell to staring at the ceiling without a word. The silence at length becoming oppressive, he commenced to hum an old seafaring tune,

That frivolous "younger twin," her bright hair held in thrall by the verdant witness to her identity, was hoeing in the strip of garden across the gravel walk, but her labors were desultory, as though her whole attention was not upon them.

"C'n she hear thet fur?" whispered the seafarer.

"I warned you," answered his hostess, irrelevantly, and the next moment Skipper Lemuel's boots and trousers-legs sopped their outraged way to the door. At that point of comparative security he turned with an emotion compounded of resentment and delight.

"You wait," he bawled back over the wavering trail of his retreat. "I'll fix you, when—er—when—" He glanced behind him and hesitated.

"When the cows come home," supplied his tormentor. "We don't keep them," she cried after his receding form, and he distinctly heard a sound of laughter.

This was the day upon which he answered the question: "Mister—'r' you a pirate?" to his own uneasy soul on the after-deck of the *Equatorial Dawn*. And then, as we have recounted, he went below to snatch a few hours of troubled slumber.

The silence of the night was disturbed by a rumor of oars creaking in rowlocks. By and by they ceased, and then there came a sound of splashing as Skipper Lemuel climbed over the gunwale of the stranded dinghy into some four inches of water which covered the flats. The note of the morning before had designated an unfortunate hour for the venture—an hour when the tide was at its ebb and fifty yards the nearest approach a small boat could make to the beach-line. The night-rover took a small anchor out of the boat, sunk one of its flukes in the sandy bottom with his boot, and spattered his way to the shore, where he stood, shivering slightly and with his head revolving in an inquisitive circle, for upward of fifteen minutes.

"I'll fix 'er," he muttered under his breath. Then he began to grow uneasy. He remembered the laugh which had pursued him down the gravel path the previous morning, and in the memory

its echo possessed a certain disturbing quality of derision. He fell to tramping furiously up and down the beach, reiterating at bitter intervals his intention of fixing her.

"I do hope I'm not late," a whisper floated through the shadows. The ardent swain halted and gloomed at a vague figure which approached.

"No—no," he said. "Not at all."

"Oh, I'm so glad. Now we must hurry."

"Do tell. I hedn't thought of it. I'll take yer bundil." With an astonishing exhibition of urbanity he relieved her of the suit-case she carried and strode into the shallow water. "Come 'long," he called over his shoulder. He had proceeded perhaps a dozen steps before he became aware that he was proceeding alone. He turned, perplexed and impatient.

"Well?"

"Lemuel," complained the lady.

"Yes? What is it?"

"Lemuel, I can't walk—through that."

"Why?" Her suitor left "in Heaven's name" unuttered.

"Why, Lemuel—I'd get my feet sopping!"

The man of ships lifted his eyes to heaven. He abstracted one of his own feet from the water and allowed it to drip significantly for a long moment.

"You'll have to carry me," came the quavering plaint of his lady, "—in your arms."

The first blue-gray flush lightened the eastern sky. The man put his boot back in the water and shifted the suit-case wearily from one hand to the other.

"She hez her off days," he sighed. Then he raised his eyes to that luminous threat of the coming day and sighed again.

"But—but mebbly she's wuth it, after all."

The sun rode high in a blue heaven and a moderate breeze out of the southwest bowled the *Equatorial Dawn* pleasantly over the sparkling waters. Far and far away along the vessel's fading wake the diaphanous sand-cliffs of Old Harbor hung for a moment on the skyline and were gone.

The master of the vessel lounged at

ease within handy reach of the wheel, smoking his pipe. His thumbs were tucked comfortably beneath his suspenders; his face was illuminated by the suggestion of a smile; he meditated largely over the surface of the sea. By and by one of his hands abandoned its suspender-strap and strayed to the mid-ports of his vest.

"Hey, woman!" he bawled pleasantly, without shifting his eyes from the horizon, "how about that thar breakf's? Putty nigh ready?"

No answer.

He reiterated the substance of his inquiry in a slightly louder tone of voice, and then, startled and gasping profanely, he struggled to free his neck from the embrace of a soft, round arm which had overtaken it from behind.

"I'm here, Lemuel," came the tender but quite superfluous reassurance. "Don't shout at your little wife."

He became aware that something pressed against his cheek; a wisp of auburn hair tickled his right nostril, and he was about to sneeze violently when a glow of foreign color in the corner of his eye distracted him.

He threw off his encumbrance and retreated to the deck-house, where he leaned, glowering and perspiring, his wide eyes fixed upon his wife.

"Which be ye?" he demanded.

"Which? I don't understand you, Lemuel."

"Yer ribb'n—look at yer ribb'n. It's green, ain't it?"

"Why, of course it is, you old silly! Isn't this 'Light week'?" She stopped and appeared to evolve a new thought. Then she laughed, pointing a thumb at herself. "I guess I'm the silly, to be thinking of 'Light week' now—or 'kitchen week' either—ha-ha. Good-by, 'Light week.'"

Her lord and master sat down slowly.

"'Light week.' Woman, I don't foller ye."

"Why, 'Light week,' you know. The

week you tend light, Goosey. The other week's when you do the house-work and wear a blue hair-ribbon—that's the only way father could ever tell us apart. 'Light week's green. I always thought it was silly—having to wear one color one week and another color the next, year in and year out—but father used to be in the navy and said it was dis'pl'ne. You look fairly faint, you poor soul. I'll run right down-stairs and finish that breakfast, now."

The *Equatorial Dawn*, through long neglect of her tiller, had begun to luff up into the wind and rattle her canvas warningly. Mechanically Skipper Lemuel crossed the deck; mechanically he shifted the wheel; mechanically he squinted at the leach of the mainsail till it grew taut again; mechanically he muttered, "Waal, I'll be dinged!" A muffled but cheery hail impinged upon his consciousness.

"Come on down and eat your wedding breakfast, Lemuel."

He moved to the companionway mechanically.

"Mind and take off your hat before you come down here," continued the voice of the Younger Twin.

The master's hand, where it was suddenly arrested upon the edge of the opening, showed white around the knuckles. He sucked in a huge breath of air and strove in vain to keep his voice from shaking as he bent down and tested fate.

"I guess it's my cabin," he challenged.

"And I guess it's my breakfast," came back the sweet but unyielding answer. "Now if you're at all anxious for food, Lemuel dear, you know what—"

The master of the *Equatorial Dawn* straightened up and mopped his streaming brow with a red-and-yellow bandana.

"Waal, I'll be double-dinged!" he pronounced, cautiously removing the ancient derby from his head. And the sun shone pleasantly over all the fair and happy sea.

